



7 IMMUTABLE RULES OF SUCCESSFUL TOURISM

Presented by Roger Brooks



From the book *The 25 Immutable Rules of Successful Tourism* by Roger Brooks & Maury Forman

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PLEASE NOTE: While the handout is all text, the workshop includes dozens of photos, video clips, case histories, examples, and anecdotal insights. So don't panic! The 7 Rules are educational, entertaining, and insightful.

INTRODUCTION

- Tourism is an economic development activity.
- The idea is to import more cash into your community than you export.
- Tourism is the fastest growing and one of the top three industries in 49 of 50 states.
- Tourism is successful when a visitor walks into a local business and hands the cashier a credit card or cash. You can market your community until you're blue in the face, but are businesses pulling those visitors in the door?

TOURISM TRAVEL

- The number one reason for travel is to visit friends and family.
- The number one activity is shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting.
- Overnight visitors spend three times that of day visitors.
- If you can't get passers-by to stop, you'll have a tough time becoming *the* destination.

RULE #1

FIRST IMPRESSIONS REALLY ARE LASTING IMPRESSIONS

THE RULE OF PERCEIVED VALUE

- Once you say "welcome," visitors will size you up immediately. What will they see? What will their first impressions be? Always put your entrance signs (gateways) where you will make the first, best impression.
- Curb appeal is an investment with a tremendous return.
- The greater the "perceived value," the more visitors will spend and the longer they will stay.

RULE #2

REAL MEN DON'T ASK FOR DIRECTIONS

THE RULE OF WAYFINDING

- If it's not convenient, or easy to find, chances are that visitors will not find what it is you're offering and will move on.
- Every community should have a Gateway, Signage and Wayfinding Plan that will help visitors know what you have to offer and where they are located.
- All tourism-related signage, including wayfinding or directional signs, should be decorative and should be developed as a "signage system" with color coding and similar design elements.

RULE #3

TOILETS ATTRACT MORE THAN FLIES AND OTHER RULES OF AMENITIES

THE RULE OF NECESSITY

- The number one reason people stop is for bodily relief.
- Place your restrooms close to where visitors can spend money.
- Include restrooms on your signage.
- Businesses should NOT use signs: "NO RESTROOMS."

KIOSKS NEVER SLEEP

THE 365 AND 24/7 RULE

- Travelers don't travel just during business hours.
- Your visitor information center or chamber of commerce should be working 365 days a year, 24 hours a day.
- Put up visitor information kiosks and outdoor brochure holders at local attractions, parking areas, and at visitor amenities such as public

NOTES & COMMENTS:

restroom areas.

- Make sure you have signage that notes 24 hour visitor info is there.

PARKING IS NOT JUST FOR LOVERS

THE PARKING LIMITS RULE

- Shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting is the number one activity of visitors. Visitors will spend an average of four hours in a pedestrian-friendly setting.
- Two hour parking sends customers away before they are done spending money.
- Use courtesy tickets if you insist on parking limits.
- Include RV parking areas.

RULE #4

20/20 SIGNAGE EQUALS \$\$\$

THE RULE OF PERPENDICULAR SIGNAGE

- Storefront signage should be perpendicular to the street and of uniform height and size.
- Signs should be decorative to increase the perceived value.
- Create a merchant-driven signage program that includes on-premise signs, sandwich board signs, and exterior displays.
- Merchants: Always promote your key product before the name of the store. What is it you're selling?
- No more than six words on a merchant sign. Don't use script lettering.
- General rule regarding lettering height: 1" for every 12' of distance.

RULE #5

INSANITY HAS ITS OWN REWARDS

THE RULE OF BRANDING

- In order to be successful, you must be worth a special trip. What sets you apart from your competition?
- Branding is critical, even for communities. What are you known for? What sets you apart? How are you different?
- Branding is much more than just a logo or slogan. It's your image, your value.
- Many communities need to establish a "positioning" or "repositioning" program.
- Don't try to be all things to all people. "We have it all" does not translate to sales.
- Jettison the generic. Don't let politics kill your branding efforts. Avoid the words listed to the right.

RULE #6

BE WORTHY OF A STANDING OVATION

THE RULE OF BEING THE BEST

- If you aren't "different," then you better be the best.
- Example: Okanogan County, WA promotes cross country skiing and snowmobiling, but so do 18 other counties in Washington state. Okanogan County has been touted as "Perhaps the best cross country skiing on the continent" by several national publications. Being #1 is always a powerful draw - but is very hard to maintain. People are always gunning for number one.
- Example: Branson, MO now owns the title of "Live music capital," taking the title from Austin, TX. Whistler Resort in British Columbia now is the top rated ski resort in North America, dethroning Vail, CO.
- Look for third-party endorsements - they carry far more weight than a self-

AVOID THE FOLLOWING:

- Discover
- Explore
- The four season destination
- We have it all
- Outdoor recreation
- Hiking, biking, fishing...
- Historic downtown
- Something for everyone
- Relax
- Gateway
- Center of it all
- Escape
- For a change of pace
- Make memories here
- Do nothing here
- Your home away from home

NOTES & COMMENTS:

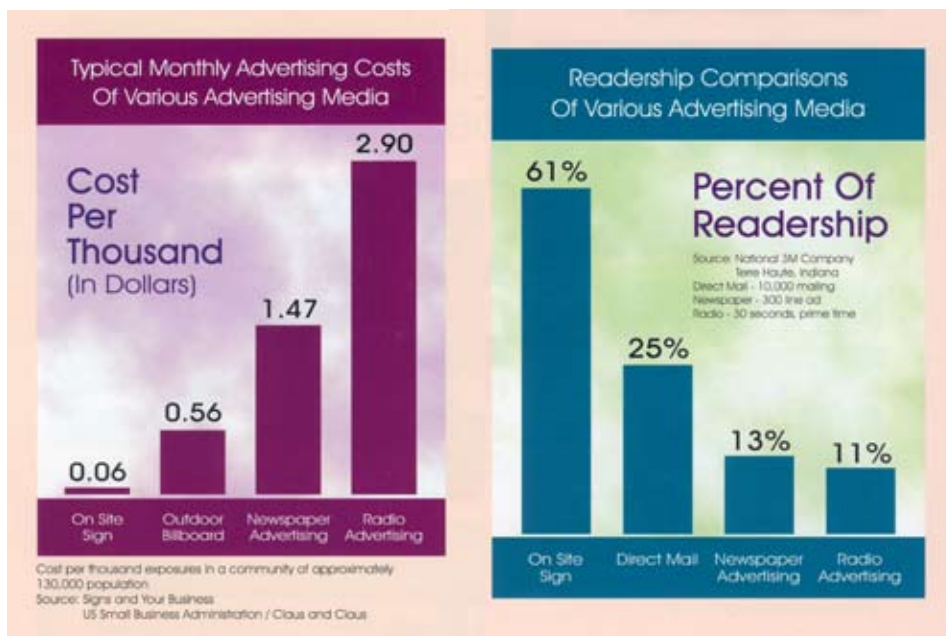
promoted title.

RULE #7

SELL THE RAPIDS, NOT THE RIVER

THE RULE OF SELLING EXPERIENCES

- Always sell the “experience:” the activity, not the place, not the county, not the city. Sell experiences.
- Instead of “historic district” (a collection of buildings), sell “historic shopping district” - the activity in a nice setting.
- If you sell river rafting, use photos of river rafters screaming in delight, not just pictures of the river.
- Scenic vistas only last a few minutes. Then what?



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The full-color book, *The 25 Immutable Rules of Successful Tourism*, includes dozens of photos, examples, case histories, and more information about each of these rules. It is available for \$14.95 and can be ordered on-line at www.kendallhunt.com (in the top left corner is a “search” box. Type in “25 Immutable Rules” and it will take you to the order page, or you can call toll-free, 1800-228-0810.

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